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United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

Palestine refugees' properties and their revenues

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

On 9 and 11 May 2011, the Secretary-General sent notes verbales to Israel and all other Member States, drawing their attention to the relevant provisions of General Assembly resolutions 65/98 to 65/101 and requesting information by 8 July 2011 concerning any action taken or envisaged in relation to the implementation of those resolutions. Replies dated 2 June and 8 July 2011 were received from Denmark and Israel responding, inter alia, to the request contained in paragraph 4 of resolution 65/101. The full text of the replies is reproduced in the present report. No information has been received from other Member States regarding the implementation of resolution 65/101.

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1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 65/101, on Palestine refugees' properties and their revenues.

2. In a note verbale dated 9 May 2011, the Secretary-General drew the attention of the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations to General Assembly resolutions 65/98 to 65/101, all of 10 December 2010, with the request that the Permanent Representative inform him by 8 July 2011 of any steps that his Government had taken or envisaged taking to implement the relevant provisions of the resolutions.

3. On 11 May 2011, the Secretary-General sent a note verbale to all other Member States drawing their attention to the relevant provisions of General Assembly resolutions 65/98 to 65/101 and requesting information by 8 July 2011 on any actions taken or envisaged in relation to their implementation.

4. A reply dated 2 June 2011 was received from Denmark responding to the request contained in paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 65/101. The full text of the reply reads as follows:

> With regard to resolutions 65/98, 65/99 and 65/100, paragraph 25, Denmark has in 2010 supported the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) with a core contribution of DKr 70 million as part of its continuous support to the Agency, and expects to contribute a similar amount in 2011. Furthermore, in 2010 Denmark contributed an additional DKr 10 million for the implementation of educational activities in Gaza, which is yet another expression of support to the development mission of the Agency and represents a concrete investment in the future of Palestine refugees. Denmark also contributed DKr 5 million for the relief and recovery appeal of UNRWA in Nahr el-Bared camp in Lebanon in 2010.
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> In addition, the Danish health-care company Novo Nordisk has joined a partnership agreement with the Agency to improve the health systems and fight diabetes and its associated illnesses for the Palestinian refugees.
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> With specific regard to resolution 65/100, paragraph 24, regarding special allocations for grants and scholarships for higher education to Palestine refugees, Denmark has in 2010 supported the higher education of two Palestinian individuals through the Danida Fellowship Centre. In 2009, Denmark supported three Palestinians through the Danida Fellowship Centre.
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> Regarding resolution 65/101, in which States are urged to provide the Secretary-General with any pertinent information in their possession concerning Arab property, assets and property rights in Israel, Denmark contributes through the continuous reporting on the overall political and developmental situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Furthermore, Denmark contributes to information and monitoring of the issues through support to human rights organizations in the field.

5. A reply dated 8 July 2011 was received from Israel responding, inter alia, to the request contained in paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 65/101. The full text of the reply reads as follows:

> While Israel voted against these resolutions in the light of their politicization and one-sided perspective, as it has done on similar resolutions

in the past, the Permanent Mission wishes to reiterate Israel's support for the humanitarian activities of UNRWA. In this respect, Israel reaffirms its intention to continue facilitating the extension of humanitarian services by UNRWA to its beneficiaries in the field.

Despite an ongoing and acute threat to its security, Israel has gone to great lengths to foster conditions for Palestinian economic development and cooperation, including by liberalizing the system by which civilian goods enter Gaza and assisting in extending humanitarian assistance to Palestinian beneficiaries.

Since the beginning of 2010, Israel has approved the building of 72 UNRWA projects in Gaza. However, UNRWA, for reasons of its own, has commenced work on only 33 of those projects (of those, 10 have been completed). In education, for example, Israel has approved the building of 24 new schools in Gaza (not including an additional 18 new educational projects approved in June 2011). However, UNRWA has started work on only 11 schools. It should also be noted that despite the delay in the execution by UNRWA of the approved projects, in the period 2008-2010 UNRWA built 35 new schools in Gaza, an increase of 40 per cent compared with the number of schools built in the period 2000-2007.

Over the last year the Government of Israel has also authorized major steps to ease security-related restrictions in the West Bank. In 2010, 98 roadblocks were removed throughout Judea and Samaria and there is a free flow of movement between all major Palestinian cities in Judea and Samaria — from Jenin in the north to Hebron in the south. Growth in terms of gross domestic product (GDP) in the West Bank for 2010 was 8 per cent and tourists' visits increased by 49 per cent, mainly to Bethlehem.

The positive trend was maintained in the first quarter of 2011, when GDP grew by 3.4 per cent compared with the first quarter of 2010.

Despite attacks by Hamas, Israel continues to facilitate the entry of large quantities of humanitarian aid supplies and other products into Gaza. In 2010, there was a 28 per cent increase in the number of truckloads that were transferred into Gaza (39,868 in 2010 compared with 31,055 in 2009) and the daily average of truckloads transferred into Gaza amounted to 163 truckloads a day, a 43 per cent increase compared with 2009. Export from the Gaza Strip was also expanded: 152 tons of strawberries and 368,208 flowers were exported in 2010. Also in 2010, 17,924 patients and accompanying individuals were permitted to exit the Gaza Strip for medical care, a 70 per cent increase compared with 2009. Throughout the year, Israel maintained the supply of electricity to the Gaza Strip. The transfer of diesel for the Gaza power station was carried out according to the requests of the Palestinian Authority — 70,876,781 litres of diesel were transferred.

These changes resulted in an increase of 15 per cent in GDP in Gaza in 2010. This positive trend continued in the first quarter of 2011, when GDP grew by 24.4 per cent and per capita GDP grew by 20 per cent compared with the first quarter of 2010.

Notwithstanding the above, terrorist organizations in the West Bank and the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip remain active in planning, preparing and attempting to execute terrorist attacks.

In 2010, 463 terrorist attacks emanated from or were carried out in the West Bank, leading to the deaths of nine Israeli citizens. These attacks were carried out in all forms and on all fronts, particularly by Hamas.

The first half of 2011 witnessed an alarming escalation in the nature of terrorist activity against Israeli targets in the West Bank and Jerusalem. In the first five months of 2011, 278 terrorist attacks were carried out in or emanated from the West Bank, resulting in the deaths of 11 Israeli citizens including, in March 2011, the brutal murder of the Fogel family, in which five family members (father, mother and three children — an 11-year- old, a 4-year-old and a baby of 3 months) were murdered in their sleep by two terrorists who had penetrated their home.

In 2010, 372 terrorist attacks emanated from the Gaza Strip. In the first four months of 2011, we witnessed an alarming increase in terror attacks emanating from the Gaza Strip (currently the number stands at 163). Also alarming is the escalation in the nature of the attacks, which, in addition to Grad missiles, rockets and mortar shells, involve anti-tank missiles aimed at Israeli civilian populations. One example is the attack that was carried out on 7 April 2011, when an anti-tank missile was fired from Gaza at a school bus, killing one Israeli teenager.

Notwithstanding its support for the humanitarian activities of UNRWA, Israel remains concerned by the political motivation of the aforesaid resolutions and is disturbed by the fact that they present a one-sided view that fails to reflect the reality on the ground. In this respect, public statements by UNRWA officials with a strong political and one-sided tone are deeply troubling. As a professional, humanitarian body, UNRWA must be vigilant in avoiding references to matters of a political nature.

Israel supports the consolidation of UNRWA resolutions and the removal of all extraneous political language. Moreover, Israel urges the Secretary-General and UNRWA to consider, together with the concerned parties, ways in which the United Nations can enhance the manner in which it advances the welfare of the Palestinian people.

In this respect, Israel favours the application, in the Palestinian context, of the standard principles guiding the United Nations with respect to the treatment of refugees. Specifically, the mandate of UNRWA should be such that entitlement to its services is defined in a manner consistent with the standard United Nations policy on refugees. Furthermore, the mandate of UNRWA should include the active promotion, in the Palestinian context, of the broadly applied United Nations goals of resettlement and local integration of refugees.

The annual General Assembly resolutions on UNRWA represent a politically motivated departure from the standard United Nations policy on refugee matters. This politicization of a strictly humanitarian issue has exacerbated the situation of the Palestinian refugees by preventing practical solutions to their needs, such as have been successfully implemented with

respect to numerous groups of refugees around the world. Israel attaches importance to promoting such changes in these resolutions as will ensure that the mandate of UNRWA is consistent with the general principles guiding United Nations policy on refugees.

6. No information has been received from other Member States with regard to the request contained in paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 65/101.